



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## Office of the Governor

Robert F. McDonnell  
Governor

August 14, 2012

Dear Board Members of the University of Virginia,

Congratulations on the University of Virginia again being ranked #1 in public higher education by Forbes Magazine! The University also moved up 10 spots in the overall higher education rankings. Very well done!

To the new Board members, I welcome you, and to the returning members, I thank you for your continued service. I'm confident that you will have a productive annual retreat. I applaud you for developing a robust retreat agenda, "Leading Change and Sustaining Excellence." I am pleased to see your time will include discussing board roles and relationships, in addition to closely reviewing the details of the major reforms in the Top Jobs legislation enacted last year, and the subsequent work of the Higher Education Advisory Committee (HEAC). I appointed Dr. Sullivan as a member last year. I was delighted to see the agenda include a candid discussion of the "evolutions affecting higher education", and how the Board and President Sullivan will work together "to bring positive change".

The recent events on campus prompted and renewed numerous important questions about everything from board governance procedures to the reforms needed to maintain UVA's extraordinary reputation. You now have an historic opportunity for open and direct discussion on these issues to lay the foundation for generations of students to enjoy innovative and excellent instruction at a reasonable price at Mr. Jefferson's University. All of our public higher education governing boards must closely evaluate their institutions' challenges and opportunities in creating greater access and affordability, while continuing to seek greater efficiencies through technology enhanced instruction, year round use of facilities, and other cost saving strategies. The new incentive, initiative, and enrollment based funding formula we enacted in the budget this session will help facilitate and drive this discussion. Above all else, the focus must be on maintaining and improving academic standards and serving the young people who attend to embrace their dreams and careers.

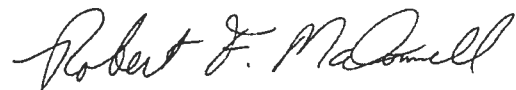
The Top Jobs Act crafted with significant input from boards, presidents, business leaders, and legislators sets a clear vision for the future of higher education in the Commonwealth, to award an additional 100,000 degrees, with a focus on STEM, healthcare, and other high demand associate and undergraduate degrees. Each institution must evaluate enrollment, retention, and graduation rates to ensure alignment between the state's and students needs and, the institutions' strengths. Most institutions should increase their enrollment, while other institutions should focus on retention and graduation rates. Your leadership at UVA in being the first school to set a significant enrollment growth target will help the Commonwealth meet our statewide degree attainment goal, and permit more Virginians access to Virginia's flagship university. I also

applaud you for being the first to announce a markedly lower tuition increase for 2012-2013 at 3.8%, a trend followed by many of your peers. Well done, with more progress to be made.

In June, when I made the new appointments to the Board with an excellent group of leaders from academia, business, medicine, technology, law, and the alumni association, I also asked Leonard Sandridge and Bill Goodwin to serve as senior advisors to the board. They both command immense respect from the University community, and their vast experience and outstanding judgment will be of value to you as you set the strategic direction for the University. In this role, they will provide you with counsel on an array of matters and assist the university in solving problems and facilitating communications based on their decades of institutional knowledge and understanding of the university. Mr. Sandridge and Mr. Goodwin will, at your discretion and upon request, facilitate improved dialogue and collaboration in implementing the reforms in the Top Jobs 21 legislation. Both men understand the illustrious history of UVA and both are committed to building a future based on excellence and innovation.

As Mr. Jefferson was a visionary leader ahead of his time in 1819, so you as heirs to his legacy can use UVA's preeminent position in American higher education as a platform for the next phase of growth and innovation for the state and the country. The topics you discuss at this retreat will provide ongoing opportunities for the university to expand its culture of excellence for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. Finding solutions best for UVA will take thoughtful dialogue lead by the board with engagement from university leadership, faculty, students, and key constituents. Your success will serve as a model for not only institutions in Virginia, but all higher education institutions in the nation. I know that you and President Sullivan working closely and honestly together will accomplish great things.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert F. McDonnell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" and last name "McDonnell" clearly legible.

Robert F. McDonnell

cc: Dr. Teresa Sullivan  
The Honorable Laura Fornash  
The Honorable Martin L. Kent